557 passing before his door and thus empty him of his nyama. The man
576 grows thin and poor. The griot may bring about his death with evil
778 words, their nyama attacking the heart, the chest, then the entire
564 body of the victim.

The griot's power over the person he flatters becomes more involved and varies according to what he is reciting. If he recites the burudyu several times, if he speaks at length of the ancestors, their nyama enters his mouth and is added to his own, thus reinforcing the power of the word. Thus, when the griot recites a barama without receiving payment, his nyama attacks the person spoken to. If this offense is repeated and if the burudyu is recited, the man is forced to pay if he does not wish to be attacked by the much more formidable nyama of the ancestors.

In these various situations, the tere of the person flattered intervenes: if it is good, it fights to defend the person, but if it is weak or wicked, it joins the ancestral forces and the person is doubly threatened.

The recitation is always made by the griot before a witness so that his action will be more binding and make the miser lose face. On the other hand, a man who pays the griot generously is looked after by the latter who sings of his generosity on all occasions and announces the sum he has received; often he does not hesitate to exaggerate the total amount received if he can hope to profit by doing so (1).

[TR4] 1. If the griot knows that the wealthy man he is addressing is miserly, he rubs his teeth with roots which he knows has the power to make his words even more effective.

• [554] Sometimes a man reaches a secret agreement with the griot in order to gain prestige. He publicly gives him a considerable sum, part of which the griot returns the following day as agreed upon. The gift is so generous that none can surpass it.

[575 561] This practice is particularly apparent at the time of marriage. The men of the same age grade as the groom outdo each other in their gifts to the griot. The one who has given most passes for the most generous. Sometimes the griot invents a new barama on the spot even though he does not know the device.

764 The corpse is the object of particular care. In the case of a blacksmith or a Soma, two stalks of millet are placed for a few moments on either side "for the nostalgia of the body" (1). This custom indicates

1. Fari nana fi, literally, "body of the black face."

that the soul, temporarily in the Komo altar, and the exuvia which will later replace it, feel sad for the animate body that will become the prey of the termites. These stalks symbolize the two ancestors who accompanied Koumabana into the great beyond, the death in this case repeating in some way the story of the appearance of death on the world (2).

2. See pp. 45, 46.

The combination of the body and the two symbols adds up to the number three, the male number, and recalls the three taps given to the newborn of male sex at his birth. A few moments later a kinsman places the stalks on each side of the door to the dead man's house. [576] The mourners who come to convey their condolences crouch before them, putting cowrie shells at their feet in the greatest silence, for "to talk and to cry increases the sins of the dead man, and tears increase his burden."

764 554 If the deceased is an important personage, especially if he is chief of the village or head of a family, the signs of the actual world and the future world (bolo ti doniya, Fig. 1) are sometimes drawn upon his index finger and thumb. The senãnku, the blacksmiths, and the griot come to recite his device (barama) and receive in thanks the clothes which belonged to him.

764 The eldest son of the Komo chief, who is first advised of the death, brings the news to his father who asks him to announce it to the men of his age grade. Each of the subsequent age grade is notified by a delegate from the preceding one. Finally, the young circumcised men, recently admitted to the society, go to tell the women and the uncircumcised the hour when the mask is to come out. However, only the funeral of an elder, a village or district chief, obligates all the members to move about.

*173
[554]

2. The kasa is a kind of woolen coverlet from Macina. Persons of importance are accompanied by a bearer who carries the coverlet and spreads it out as a seat.

[70] On the day set, Ngolo Dyara secretly sent his son Ntyi across to the left bank with 2,500 horsemen.

Each chief appeared, with his bearer carrying a chicken and a red-haired dog for use in the ceremony of swearing on the idols. Ngolo himself brought a chicken and an ox.

When the time arrived, Ngolo went first to take his place in front of the idol. He killed a chicken in accordance with the rites and said: "Idol, make me guardian of the door of my master until the day when I replace him."

"That's no oath, and your words are inadmissible," cried Ngolo Ké-ba.

"Then show me what I must do."

"It's not my place to teach you how to behave before an idol whom you have been serving for years. What I say is, you are falsifying the purpose of this meeting. You have only to say: 'Idol, if I betray my brothers, you may cut out my heart and my liver, but if they betray me, do the same thing to them.'"

"I shall never say such a thing."

"Then let us part."

"You are the oldest men here. Speak first."

"No, it is your duty to begin and you have only a few words to say."

"I shan't say them. Let's leave."

Ntyi came up to say: "What is all this, father? Hasn't the oath been taken yet?"

Ngolo Ké-ba pointed at Ntyi and asked Ngolo Dyara in an ironical tone: "This is a kasa-bearer, too, I presume?"

Then addressing those present, Ntyi called out: "I can understand that you may be in no hurry to get over this, but I'm getting anxious to be the son of the king of Ségou. Come on, hurry up! You there, Fasson, take the oath!"

At that very moment the horsemen appeared. Fasson made no objection and the others followed suit meekly. When all had sworn, Ngolo Dyara, who had taken no oath, put the idols back into his pirogue.

*173

exogamy, saying: "No one shall marry one of my daughters unless he is an inhabitant of the town." Then he charged his children never to take spouses from the Massa-si clan (Traditions historiques et légendaires, Delafosse, p. 53).

Béni Fali-Sékolo (1690-1700). Since Massa was by now a very old man, he abandoned active authority to his son, Béni Fali, called Sékoro, who was as strong and brave as his father. He continued his father's practice of armed pillage, assisted by his many brothers, the best-known of whom included: Gran, called Foro-koro; Séba, called Mana; Tyema, the son of Nya-nilé; Bo, son of Déni-ba; Massa, called [109] Bakari; Séri-ba and Allahi, who were twins; and Mo-siré-bilé.

Gran, called Foro-koro (1700-1709). Some say that intrigues by the Soninké and the people of Niamala were what persuaded the fama of Ségou, Mamari called Biton Kouloubali, to attack the Massa-si. After a siege that lasted for three years, Soumsan-na had to surrender. Foro-koro was taken prisoner and sent to Ségou, where he was put to death. His skull (1) was kept

1. Mamari made it into a box for his amulets and it was the basis of his magic.

as a talisman by Biton.

Others, more explicit, tell how and why the attack was carried out against Sounsan-na. Mamari called Biton Kouloubali had given his daughter ba (2) Sana in marriage to Sana-ba

● [554 576]

2. The word ba, which literally means "mother," is here used as a title of respect.

Mamari (3) Kouloubali of Mourdia. When the wedding party that

3. Sana-ba Mamari means "Mamari, son of the woman named Sana-ba."

764 Burials are never willingly held on either Wednesday or
789 Saturday (1) [Ed., see footnote above].

Finally, a small white chicken (2) to ward off bad luck

2. If the corpse is a woman, a fertilized egg is used.

is sometimes put into the niche just before it is closed off (1) [Ed., see footnote 1 above].

Upon returning from the burial, someone clubs the dead man's dog (1) [Ed., see footnote 1 above], unless he left express orders to the contrary. Some Bambara even go so far
[554] as to buy a dog with this posthumous honor in mind. This seems to be another magic practice to exorcise the ghost of the deceased (1) [Ed., see footnote 1 above].

When they have returned to the house, the brothers-in-law of the deceased eat the national dish, millet mush (to). When they leave for their homes, each is given a rooster or a hen in the name of the deceased, which they must eat en route before they reach home. If the fowl [170] were not eaten until they reached their villages, it would arouse the dead man's vengeance; his ghost (nyama) would haunt these impious persons. This too seems to be another magic practice to counteract the evil effects of death.

764 (c) The funeral celebration. As soon as the death has
431 been announced, it is the duty of every relative, neighbor, friend, or anyone under any sort of obligation to the deceased to bring an offering in proportion to his rank or degree of obligation for the purpose of honoring the dead (1).

1. We noted earlier the sanctions applied at the funerals of Biton and Ngolo.

In certain cases, the total of these offerings is very large. The chronicle of Ségou tells us that when Ngolo died the cowries contributed filled seven huts, representing several thousand francs. Besides, people give whatever they wish or can afford: a horse, a cow, a sheep, fowl, cowries, gold, strips of native cotton, fabrics, grain, etc.

596 and property. On the other hand, he also has duties toward
614 them, for it is the essence of the institution to support its members.

561 All the acts of the fa, even the arbitrary ones, are,
578 according to law, under the control of the senate. It should
596 not be forgotten that the members of the community are di-
614 vided into two hostile groups: that of the "elders," which includes the fa, and that of the "young masters." The fa could hardly [184] keep the common property all to himself, so he shares it more or less as he pleases, and naturally, the elders are among the most generously treated. The young men seldom get any such favors, hence their resentment against the elders, due largely to envy of their favored position.

596 It is customary for a fa when he becomes the head of a
614 patriarchy to leave the management of his own community to his eldest son (1). This separation of interests is essential in

● [554 492]

1. The eldest son, or better, the first-born son, thus occupies a privileged position, and in Kaarta he is usually provided with a white horse to make him conspicuous. See p. 122 about the death of 98 first-born sons mounted on white horses.

order to prevent the fa from despoiling the patriarchy to benefit his own community. The history of these countries shows how often this rule is broken by ambitious men who hope to profit by the general confusion to build up a considerable fortune. Among both the elders and the young men they find willing accomplices, and as their power increases, they extend their extortions. There are many signs, however, of the fragility of their despotism, which they themselves recognize. They usually, therefore, take pains to settle the question of succession in advance hoping to avoid the collapse of their achievements. Wasted effort! Custom, which they have ignored, regains its rights when they die and often does so during their lifetime. This is a logical explanation of the fact that

583 Finally, if the union is still in effect at the time of the
768 husband's death, the wife's community theoretically regains authority over her, provided that the bride price is paid back.

These three definite points show that lawful union, or
581 marriage, legally speaking, is essentially a kind of usufruct of the
626 woman to the advantage of the husband, and the price is the bride price. As a result, the woman's community is obliged to see to it that the husband enjoys his rights. Hence, when a wife misbehaves, no matter how, the husband reports it to her community which takes steps to bring the erring girl to terms for fear of having to refund the bride price. On the other hand, the husband is expected to treat his wife in a manner worthy of her, that is, with consideration for her origins, and if he fails to do so, he risks the consequences of breach of the marriage contract.

There are, therefore, reciprocal rights and duties required of the spouses. Based on the marriage contract, these rights and duties are reinforced, completed, or, more generally, influenced by ethics no less than by the feelings of the [207] couple in relation to each other and to their respective communities.

581 This is why a girl from a great house with high standing (1)
562
● [554]

1. Thus, in the western Sudan, the daughters of the Massa-si are treated with great deference.

cannot be treated like a common concubine, even though the husband may prefer the concubine to the wife, because the free daughter of a powerful house, richly dowered, is virtually independent in the household. If she is sufficiently well off, she may even live in a house of her own, and since her only obligation is the sexual conjugal duty, she receives her husband as she would a lover.

On the other hand the free woman of modest circumstances and, even more, of lowly birth is her husband's companion in wretchedness. She does all kinds of work, even the hardest and most disagreeable, and she desires no rupture that would deprive her of the only affection that sustains her, the love of her children.

642
565 3. the free men;

4. people of caste, such as blacksmiths, etc. (see below);

5. slaves.

567 e. Slavery. -- A man became a slave in three ways: by violence, by obligation, or by birth.

567 1. By violence. If a war captive is important, he may be killed or he may be held for ransom and treated with consideration.
727 A Fama captured in war could become an army chief or dignitary in
554 the country of his captor and could found a family there. In no case could he be reduced to captivity on his own territory.

[60] If the vanquished is a man of caste, he is spared captivity and generally enters the service of the conquering Fama;
[608] if he is a sénanku of the victor, the latter gets rid of him by freeing him. Finally, if the captive has the same name as the victorious
[551] Fama, he is freed, because he is recognized as being a relative of the Fama.

When the captive is a free man of humble origin, he is sold by the Fama, unless the Fama gives him to his warriors.

567 2. By obligation. A free individual became a slave in
681 punishment for his crimes or misdemeanors; he was then sold for the
426 profit of the Fama. A fa could sell one of his children to meet his
858 debts, but he subsequently had to try to buy him back once he was freed of his obligations.

567 3. By birth. A woman slave bears only slaves. The slave born in the house is called a wolo-so. If a woman slave is got with child by a free man, she becomes free, as does her child. But if the mother is repudiated, she reverts to slavery, while the child remains free.

As the number of slaves grew, their organization became
567 complicated and hierarchic. The slaves under the Fama of Ségou
644 were divided into series, each having as chief the eldest of the slaves. The eldest of these chiefs became chief of the dyon-kuru or dyon-futu (ensemble of slaves). Monteil shows the important role this slave chief has played in the history of Ségou. In fact, he was the spokesman for all the grievances of the slaves and often became the Fama's adviser. At the death of the Fama, the slave chief confirmed the power of his successor by assuring him or refusing him the submission of all the slaves.

b. Organization of Work

241 621 Work on the land is the only kind of work suitable for free men, for to work the land is to purify it. All agricultural operations [622 are set in motion by the dugu-tigi and are regulated by the fa who 516] assigns tasks by age classes. Each member of the community must work for it every day, except Monday and Thursday, from dawn to about 4:30 p.m. He may be helped, or even replaced, by his children and his captives. The rest of the time he may work for himself in his personal field or in the little fields situated along the water courses and the rivers, which are not periodically redistributed and are considered almost as personal and hereditary property. The fruit of this labor constitutes the personal savings of the community member.

316 423 The exploitation of the subsoil is governed by other rules which we still know only imperfectly. Like the soil, the subsoil belongs to the master of the land. Iron ore was extracted solely by the [324] blacksmith who paid the master of the land a rent in the form of hoes or axes. To exploit the gold mines, thousands of natives went in family groups to the placers at the beginning of the dry season. [63] The location of the placers was determined by the priests and changed every year. The men dig multiple small holes very close to each other, which may go very deep depending on the depth of the barren layer. When the calabashes of gold-bearing earth are brought up, the women wash the earth. The placers are abandoned at the beginning of the rains after three or four months of exploitation. Before the French occupation, gold was the exclusive property of the Fama and could in no case be the object of commerce. To- [439] day, gold is generally sold at the placers to Syrian, native, or European merchants, who have established veritable shops at the mining centers, shops which contain everything necessary for the miner's life.

463 554 The exercise of a profession other than the cultivation of the land is reserved to artisans who are accorded the insulting name of nyaman-kala, for only work on the land is noble work. These artisans form separate families in every Sudanese society, which has caused Europeans to call them, improperly, people of caste. They are divided into independent guilds.

463 554 [324] The numu: blacksmiths, whose wives are generally potters. The smiths are the masters of fire, those who cook the sacred earth in order to extract the minerals or to fix the form of pottery.

The loro: coppersmiths.

The garanka: leatherworkers.

The kule: woodworkers, and sometimes saddlemakers.

The donso: hunters, who form powerful and feared associations.

The somono, or fishermen, who have a status a little less restricted than that of the artisans mentioned above.

The dyeli or griot, domestic factotums of a kind, who, although the most disdained of all these, are nevertheless the family archivists.

[563] One may add two Peul shepherd tribes, identified by Manson: the Dyanna and the Bouguena (1).

1. See Monteil, Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta [The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta].

463 564 All of these artisans are endogamous and fixed in caste, father to son. However, the fact that a man belongs to a caste does not obligate him to exercise the caste trade.

326 463 608 The most powerful guild is incontestably that of the blacksmiths. From their ranks are recruited all the priests, the Fama's interpreters, the well-diggers, the grave-diggers, the executioners, the circumcisers, etc. They are the sénanku of all the families and are in charge of all the purification rites.

554 The griot are equally feared, because of the power of their words and because they spread afar the renown of the chiefs.

564 The free man who marries a woman of caste marries beneath himself, and his children are looked down on.

[326] The purest blacksmith families are those of the Fané Balo; the purest griot those of the Koniaté. People of caste always remain [327] at liberty; when they are captured during a war, they make themselves known and keep their status.

463 326 [64] These different guilds are sufficient to maintain in the Bambara country a certain industry of a distinctly artisan and non-specialized type. Thus, the smiths work iron, copper, and wood to

822 in the rites. "Red is the color of the middle regions of the world. It characterizes dry heat; it is the color of anger and of justice, that of the king, center of the kingdom." Black or indigo (2) is

2. Zahan, Les couleurs chez les Bambara du Soudan francais [Colors Among the Bambara of the French Sudan], Notes Africaines, 1951.

identified with the North and the [98] rainy season. It evokes impurity, obscurity. It denotes sadness and the end of labor. The South accords with the ancestors and the color white which represents light and purity; it is the color of Faro. The whole system 286 of bands woven from different colored threads according to various 822 designs translates the different conditions of the wearer; for each band has its own history, its definite use, and its cosmogonic correspondences. The study of this was begun by G. Dieterlen in Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion] and is being 291 pursued at the present time. Today the form of clothing varies according to the age and sex of the wearer. Young children are nude, with the loins girt with a cotton string or with a belt of blue beads or cowry shells. Sometimes, two small copper bells attract the protection of Faro by their sound. Up until their marriage, the young girls wear a loincloth passed between their legs and held in place by eight bead belts. When they are married, women wear the loincloth open, attached at the waist, and a cotton handkerchief covers [854] their hair. When a child is born, another cloth knotted at the chest holds the infant astraddle on the mother's back A chief's wife ● [554] wore a piece of material made of seven bands which she threw over her shoulder. Very young boys wear short drawers whose form varies with the age classes. Later they are dressed in a short tunic with a neck opening cut out and fitted sleeves, and in ample short breeches [801] formed of three bands (the masculine number), passing between the legs and three bands on each side covering the thighs. The waist is also encircled by four times three bands, numbers of femininity and of masculinity. Over their clothes, men and women wear a large cloak with an opening cut out in the middle for the head and whose ends are sown together, leaving large openings on each side. These cloaks have a large pocket in front and are embroidered with symbolic

304 The Bambara decorate their faces and bodies with numerous
773 scarifications, with the aim of conferring on the wearer the qualities symbolized by the scars. By their influence on the character and temperament of an individual, they help him to come up to the ideal man. These marks are associated with the myth of the origin of agriculture. They are eight small scars: two vertical ones at the root of the nose, three under each eye. They imitate the facial marks of the mythical being, half man, half animal, who taught men how to cultivate the soil. (1)

1. S. de Ganay, "On a form of cicatrisation among the Bambara," Man.

f. Arrangement of the Settlements

361 The Bambara village follows rules of development which allow a stranger to recognize the disposition of the huts immediately and to single out a chief's house, that of a blacksmith, or that of any other member of the society. In fact, the village is built to the north or east of the protective tree. To the south of the village, [778] is the sacred wood, dwelling place of the chief of the spirits, where the religious ceremonies and the initiation rites take place. As more families come to live in the village, they build their huts around that of the chief, except to the east, for the chief must see the sun rise. The oldest son of the chief, his eventual successor, will have his own plot near his father's. The house of the Komo is situated outside of the village, to the south or west, hidden in a wood or a thicket. At the edge of the village is a round cabin, the house of the Nyama, in the middle is a square cabin with painted walls, house of the Gna (see the chapter on religion). In the center of the village, a cleared place around a doubalé serves for public meetings; the elders hold their councils under the branches of the doubalé.

764 [100] Finally, the cemetery of the free men is found outside the
554 village, to the west; that of captives and people of caste is to the south of the free men's cemetery.

326 Every village has its blacksmith, for he is life, and the vil-
00 lage could not subsist without him. Before the French conquest,

793 The pagan priesthood -- like the Moslem -- also casts a halo of
776 strength and power about its priest; he becomes the close friend of his fetish, and the latter often condescends to take his diamou, or family name, and become, for example, the dasiri, or protecting genie, of a village. Depending on the name of its owner, it will be a Djara or a Kouloubali or a Tankara, etc., etc.

793 An intelligent Bambara who, for one reason or another, cannot
564 be a sorcerer, has one other means of becoming feared and powerful: he can become a gnéna sonna or dougoutigi (priest of the protecting fetish of villages, called dasiri), a gnâtigi or bolitigi (matter of a boli), or at least to belong to a retinue such as surrounds every powerful boli fetish.

793 There are curbs on the thirst for fanga, or power, however. The office of gnéna sonna is the prerogative of a particular family within which it is transmitted from brother to brother by right of inheritance, and not every Negro succeeds in obtaining a boli -- I mean an influential boli that would establish him among his people -- even though one can be obtained by purchase. A man desiring a particular boli must first form a retinue for it, and its members must be taken from the village itself; the mutual mistrust and fear of poison are so great that it is not always possible to do so. Besides the price to be paid, varying between 25 and 30 francs, there are the expenses of the konio, or wedding of the fetish (the purchaser marries his boli), which raise its cost to 60, 80, and sometimes 100 francs. Furthermore, there is a mass of liturgical formulas to be engraved in the memory. These must be learned in every detail, for the omission of one sign or gesture, the garbling of one formula can easily incur the disfavor of the fetish, which is relentless with one who is careless and causes him to perish! It should be added that before a person can reward himself with such a luxury as the acquisition of a fetish, he must consult a sorcerer and take his advice, and if he is not rich and already feared, the sorcerer knows how to place his veto. For the mass
794 of the people there is thus only one way to be safe: to become
793 associated with sects, and with as many sects as possible. Through membership they earn the title of "sons of boli," and build relationships for themselves and make friends among those in power, the

776 624 793 Such a spirit is the exclusive property of one family, and even bears its name, or diamou. Its sacrificer, called gnéna-n-sonnaba, also bears the name of dougoutigi (1); he is, in fact, the real head of

1. Gnena, "fetish," "genie"; sonnaba, "great sacrificer"; dougou, "village"; tigi, "head," "master."

[291 516]

Typical Bambara headman.

the village. Although at present the civil and religious authorities [554] are separate in many places, the gnéna-n-sonnaba, or religious priest, always holds precedence, and self-respecting people call him dougoutigi (head of the village), giving the title of sotigi (2) to the

2. So, "hut," "house"; tigi, "head."

one who has only civil authority. Here we have further evidence that the organization of the Bambara nation was, at its origin purely religious. The separation of the two authorities in certain hamlets can easily be understood.

631 Under the Bambara dynasty the kingdom of Ségou was divided into provinces, cantons, and villages. The king, Fama or Massa

769 and do not know the ways and customs of the country, they take for sacrifices to the shades of the ancestors, the sacrifices which are made to the gnéna, or djiné, genii and to the gnâ, or boli, genii.

769 554 Thus, worship of the dead does not have all the scope that people sometimes choose to attribute to it. Moreover, the Bambara revere only those dead who had a little authority on this earth, such as the gnéna-n-sonnaba, or the dougoutigi (village heads, priests of the dasiri), the sotigi (heads of quarters), and the gouatigi (1) (heads

1. The gouatigi, head of the family, is called fa, "father." This word "father" should be taken in a broad sense, for to much of the family the gouatigi is a grandfather, a brother, or an uncle. Making a sacrifice to the fa sou (fa, "father"; sou, "corpse") does not mean sacrificing to the father who begot you, to the father of the family, to the one who bore the title of gouatigi. The chief wife of a gnéna-n-sonnaba, sotigi, and gouatigi, like her husband, receives a share of the sacrifice.

of families), and this reverence is given less to the individuals themselves than to the authority they had. /233/

769 The first sacrifice to an ancestor who was a headman is made a year after his death and at the second big festival that follows his death. In order for him to be entitled to a trickle of blood, the sangafo (1) must have been completed, and it ends at the first festival

1. Sangafo, "to offer condolences on the occasion of a death."

held at the end of the sounkalo (soun, "fast"; kalo, "month"), or Ramadan (2).